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Wednesday, 15 May 2013, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jeremić ..... (Serbia)

In the absence of the President, Mrs. Adhikari (Nepal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 4.45 p.m.

High-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons

Agenda item 103 (*continued*)

Crime prevention and criminal justice

Mrs. Hrdá (Czech Republic): Let me first congratulate the organizers and facilitators of this meeting for their efforts. I would like to stress that combating human trafficking is a major challenge for today's globalized world. We would like to emphasize that the Czech Republic pays special attention to this topic and highly appreciates the systematic activities at the international level in this regard.

We also align ourselves with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/67/PV.77).

Since 2003, this area has become a priority within our fight against organized crime, when a special programme on support and protection for victims of trafficking of human beings was developed by the Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic. Currently, the programme focuses on all types of victims, regardless of the form of exploitation. In addition, the Czech Ministerial Coordination Group was established in 2008 and serves as a platform for information exchange and coordination activities in the area of the fight against the trafficking in persons at the national level. Members of this Group, including non-governmental and governmental organizations, also contribute to an annual status report and comment on strategic documents in this regard.

Last year, the Czech Republic adopted a new strategic document for the period 2012-2015, called "The National Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings in the Czech Republic". It sets out a number of measures in the area of trafficking in persons, focusing on, among other things, a description of the situation in socially excluded areas, systematic education in the area of trafficking, the ratification of important international instruments and evaluation of the special programme on support and protection for victims.

The ratification of international instruments in the area of trafficking in persons, including the protocols to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, was one of the measures defined in the strategy. Since the main obstacle to their ratification was recently removed, and the concept of the criminal liability of a legal person has been introduced into the Czech legal system, the Czech Republic is now able to ratify these instruments and join a number of other States showing their interest in combating trafficking in persons.

Mrs. Byaje (Rwanda): I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Vuk Jeremić, for convening this important meeting. I also take this opportunity to thank

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Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, for his commitment to this critical issue, and to commend the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2012*.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/67/PV.77). We also pleased the Secretary-General's reports on trafficking in women and girls, and we hope that their recommendations will create an impetus and focus for our systems to continue the fight against human trafficking and close the gaps exploited by criminals.

Rwanda values these high-level meetings on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, mostly because they present an opportunity for self-appraisal, peer-to-peer evaluation and the sharing of best practices. We call upon Member States to use this opportunity to assess achievements, gaps and challenges in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action.

In Rwanda, human trafficking is a new offense in the Rwandan criminal justice system . It emerged as a threat in 2009, when this type of crime started to be reported in police stations. Since 2009, a total of 130 cases of human trafficking have been recorded in Rwanda. Those include cases of victims who have been recovered or intercepted, and others who are still in the hands of criminals.

Investigations and research in Rwanda have revealed that the most targeted group is young females between the ages of 16 and 22, especially those from vulnerable groups, such as orphans, and from low-income families. In March 2013, Rwanda National Police intercepted a foreign agent in Rwanda who had recruited 12 young genocide orphans by promising them work and the opportunity to study abroad.

The modus operandi used by traffickers differs according to the category of the victim. In some cases, traffickers, through their local agents, approach financially vulnerable girls offering them work or other fascinating opportunities. We have also encountered a few cases where traffickers use offers of marriage as a means of attracting their victims for sexual exploitation or cheap forced labour.

Combatting the crime of trafficking in persons is possible but challenging, given its transboundary nature. Rwanda believes that forums like this high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons could be used to enhance the readiness for collaboration of States, especially neighbouring States and States of destination.

The other challenge is that the crime of trafficking often goes unreported because its victims are too frightened to give evidence. Nevertheless, Rwanda has received considerable law enforcement personnel support from around the world that has brought human trafficking offenders to justice and enabled the recovery of Rwandan human trafficking victims.

Over the years, it has been observed that continued awareness of and education on the indicators of human trafficking have led to increased intervention and arrests. The Government of Rwanda has therefore established, equipped and staffed the division of criminal investigations of transnational organized crime of the Rwanda National Police with competent officers to investigate and lay out strategies to combat that crime.

The INTERPOL office in Kigali, in partnership with the regional bureau in Nairobi, conducts joint operations targeting human trafficking. In August 2012, an operation code-named Operation Hope, which targeted human trafficking in Rwanda, was conducted in the East African community, and uncovered networks of organized criminals recruiting young girls in Rwanda.

Additionally, awareness programmes have been used in Rwanda as a measure aimed at fighting human trafficking. In many cases, victims are unaware of the tactics used by traffickers. Legislation on human trafficking has also been reviewed and amended accordingly to suit the current trends of this crime. Plans are under way also to set up a national task force on human trafficking. More importantly, the Government of Rwanda has recognized the importance of coordinating efforts across agencies, including working with new partners, such as non-governmental organizations dedicated to combating human trafficking and various other services.

Rwanda is in agreement with the assessment that trafficking in human beings is increasingly becoming a global scourge affecting all countries and regions around the world. As the Group of African States has well stated, increased poverty, unemployment, inequality,

social exclusion, marginalization and racism are among factors that make people vulnerable to trafficking in persons and contribute to exploitative conditions. Governments and subregional and regional bodies have a high calling not only to fight traffickers and liberate those already caught in the web of trafficking, but also to establish an environment that kills those criminal activities at the roots, and lay strategies and mechanisms that address issues of poverty, social exclusion, migration systems, unemployment and armed conflict, among others.

In conclusion, Rwanda reiterates its obligation to implement, where relevant, the commitments made by world leaders on transnational crime at the Millennium Summit and the 2005 World Summit, through the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1), and the commitments made by the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Governments through the Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children.

We pledge to continue our cooperation and partnership with States and Governments and the world community in the fight against this scourge.

Mrs. Zografska-Krsteska (former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): The adoption of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons in 2010 opened new possibilities for concerted action against that scourge. We have gathered at this high-level meeting to see how far we have come to put in place national legislation that reflect our commitments and legal obligations stipulated in the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and other relevant instruments; how rigorously we have implemented them and how successful we have been in countering trafficking in persons. The conclusions drawn from this event, built upon the analysis and statistics of the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2012* of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, issued last December, will guide our future work at the global, regional and national levels.

The Republic of Macedonia aligns itself with the statement of the European Union (see A/67/PV.77), and on this occasion I would like to present additional observations in my national capacity.

Combating trafficking by employing human rights-based policies and actions is high on the agenda of the Government. That dedication is reflected in the work of the National Commission on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration, an inter-agency body established in 2001 and entrusted with coordinating activities in that domain. A subgroup for combating trafficking in children has operated within the National Commission since 2003. The scope of work of the Commission has been extended to cover not only activities to combat trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation, but also a wider range of activities, including labour exploitation, begging and forced marriages.

The Commission issued the National Strategy and Action Plan for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration for the period 2013-2016 as its third consecutive strategic document. Both documents are in line with the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons and the European Union Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016. Also, both documents were based on accumulated experience in the implementation of previous policies and measures, thereby providing the logical continuation in combating trafficking in persons and illegal migration and the needed upgrade for the elimination of identified gaps. The technical expertise provided by the German Society for International Cooperation in drafting the documents was very valuable. We take this opportunity to extend our thanks to the Society and other partners that assisted us in this effort.

The key novelties in the National Strategy and Action Plan are a strong emphasis on preventive measures to address the root causes of trafficking in persons; the economic empowerment of vulnerable groups and the facilitation of their access to the labour market; and greater attention by social services to vulnerable groups and potential victims of trafficking. Other novelties, inter alia, include the promotion of awareness-raising campaigns with a view to reducing the demand that fosters the exploitation of persons, as well as a strengthening of the existing referral mechanism within the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

The evolving nature of the phenomenon of trafficking in persons requires new legal and institutional approaches. That reality prompted the amendment of the Criminal Code of the Republic

of Macedonia by introducing more severe criminal sanctions for perpetrators. At the same time, the number of prosecutions and convictions has increased. A trend in longer sentences is noticeable as well.

Addressing the problem of trafficking successfully correlates to strengthening the capacities of, inter alia, law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, members of the judiciary, border control officers and labour inspectors. By amending the laws on public prosecutors and on courts and introducing a new law on criminal procedure, new incentives have been created for increasing the efficiency and quality of investigations and ensuring better collection of evidence against the perpetrators. The academy for training judges and public prosecutors provides training on the use of special investigative measures and on the implementation of the legal provisions on witness protection in proceedings in cases of trafficking in persons and illegal immigration.

The aim of strengthening the cooperation and coordination in combating human trafficking between central and local levels is contained in our new strategic National Action Plan. The next phase will therefore be characterized by the creation of institutional structures at the local level, including mobile teams for identification, assistance and support for potential victims and groups at risk. The Macedonian Government has allocated 9.3 million denars, the equivalent of $200,000, in its budget for the implementation of the National Action Plan.

With the foregoing, we have pointed out just a few of the many activities that the Government of the Republic of Macedonia has undertaken to combat human trafficking in cooperation with civil society, private sector, international organizations and all other relevant stakeholders. We will continue to work hard to strengthen cooperation among all stakeholders at the global, regional and local levels and exchange experiences and best practices to eradicate trafficking in persons.

No human being should be treated as a commodity or be subject to exploitation. Let us make sure that becomes the omnipresent reality.

Mr. De Vega (Philippines): The Philippines welcomes the holding of this high-level meeting to appraise the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. A few months ago, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes launched the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2012* here in New York. The *Report* was made to provide information about human trafficking patterns and flows pursuant to the mandate given by resolution 64/293, adopting the Global Plan of Action, which called for an increased knowledge base with regard to trafficking in persons in order to facilitate the creation and implementation of evidence-based programmatic interventions.

The Philippines recognizes the importance of enhancing current knowledge on trafficking in persons in its national and transnational manifestations. The scourge of human trafficking is a complex issue and a global phenomenon that must be addressed in a comprehensive manner. By monitoring the international dynamics of trafficking, we gain a greater understanding of the global trends in trafficking in persons that will help us identify better ways and means to combat the global scourge.

On the domestic front, the fight against human trafficking has resulted in tighter monitoring by concerned Government agencies in the Philippines. The Philippines recently passed the expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act. That law provides for strengthened prosecution of those who engage or attempt to engage in human trafficking; it also provides for protection for trafficked victims.

The Philippine Government significantly increased funding for our Interagency Council against Trafficking from the equivalent of approximate $230,000 in 2010 to the equivalent of $1.5 million in 2011 and the equivalent of over $2.3 million in 2012. The interagency approach we have set up in the Philippines represents not only the power of partnership and collaboration with both the public and private sectors, but also the determination and collective will of the various stakeholders to overcome obstacles in combating modern day slavery.

The Government continues to prosecute and convict trafficking offenders and has implemented a new programme to protect and rehabilitate victims. Additionally, authorities continue to make efforts to address trafficking-related corruption. We have filed criminal cases against at least 18 officials in 2012. The Government has also made notable efforts to prevent trafficking, including through training public officials, strengthening and expanding structures to screen for trafficking indicators, before Filipino migrant workers depart for overseas, and negotiating bilateral agreements to protect our workers employed in foreign countries.

Human trafficking is clearly a crime that knows no borders. The Philippines maintains its active engagement in regional and global cooperation to end human trafficking. We have been deeply involved in the 2002 Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime, which has a comprehensive programme of action specific to trafficking in persons, and the 2004 ASEAN Declaration Against Trafficking in Persons, Particularly Women and Children. Just last month, the Philippines hosted a two-day experts working group meeting to develop a draft ASEAN convention and regional plan of action against trafficking in persons. The draft convention aims to facilitate cooperation among ASEAN member States to prevent and combat human trafficking in the region, paying particular attention to women, children and economic and cultural minorities, protect and assist the victims of such trafficking, and ensure just and effective punishment of traffickers.

On the multilateral front, the Philippines is a State party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. In addition to our activities as a proud member of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking, which is ably led by Belarus, and as a sponsor of the Global Plan of Action, we have spearheaded a number of Philippine-led initiatives at the United Nations, particularly our biennial resolution on trafficking in women and girls. We have also given a token contribution to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking in 2011; we are one of only 12 countries that made such a contribution to the Trust Fund.

We are gathered here to take stock of the progress made in the fight against trafficking and to reaffirm our commitment to taking concrete action to intensify our efforts to combat the global scourge by strengthening our capacity to identify victims of trafficking in persons, enhancing efforts to investigate alleged cases, strengthening means to combat trafficking, prosecuting perpetrators and investigating, prosecuting and punishing corrupt officials who engage in or facilitate trafficking in persons. All our initiatives to combat trafficking, however, need resources to enable us to achieve our objectives. Our commitment must be translated into action and tangible results. We therefore encourage Member States to contribute to the Voluntary Trust Fund, which enables Governments and all stakeholders to partner with each other to directly and meaningfully help trafficking victims, especially women and children. It is only through strong commitment and partnership that we can help bring an end to human trafficking.

Finally, allow us to convey our appreciation to the safekeepers of the Fund who are working hard to ensure that the funds are used for actually assisting victims of trafficking.

Ms. Boissiere (Trinidad and Tobago): The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is committed to the global fight against trafficking in persons and has made a number of efforts to that end. We therefore welcome the opportunity to participate in this high-level meeting to appraise the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, and we thank the President for organizing such an important event. We are also grateful to the Permanent Representatives of Austria and Cape Verde for their contributions.

Trinidad and Tobago signed the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols in 2001, and ratified those instruments in November 2007. The Government subsequently approved the implementation of an action plan to counter human trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago. These and other actions undertaken by the Government to combat trafficking in persons are in keeping with the provisions of the Global Plan of Action adopted by the General Assembly in 2010.

While Trinidad and Tobago had criminal provisions related to one or more elements of the trafficking process — such as procurement, forced detention, prostitution, sexual offences, kidnapping, and abduction — its lack of specific anti-trafficking legislation hindered its ability to effectively implement the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, also known as the Trafficking Protocol. There were also challenges relating to accurately identifying and assisting victims of trafficking, and identifying and prosecuting the various actors who engage in trafficking.

In recognition of this, a multisectoral task force was appointed to develop a policy framework to inform the drafting of legislation that would put the Trafficking in Persons Protocol into effect. A bill on trafficking in persons was debated and passed unanimously in Parliament in June 2011, and the act was proclaimed

operational on 2 January 2013, effectively criminalizing trafficking in persons, including children, and imposing severe penalties on those engaged in such activities. The act adopts a victim-centred approach, availing them of numerous social benefits and avenues for restitution.

On 11 January, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago established a counter-trafficking unit responsible for the country's day-to-day counter-trafficking response operations and, specifically, for addressing all matters related to human trafficking, including investigating cases, screening, identifying, protecting and assisting victims, and raising public awareness about the crime and its prevention.

Since the national trafficking-in-persons act also mandates the counter-trafficking unit to raise public awareness, to begin this process three sessions were convened to sensitize members of the judiciary — magistrates and High Court judges — to the issue of trafficking in persons at the national, regional and global levels. Various initiatives have also been launched, including with the assistance of relevant non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to raise national awareness about the issue. For example, this year the Ministries of National Security and Gender, Youth and Child Development joined with the Caribbean Umbrella Body for Restorative Behaviour in hosting one such programme, for which the theme was "Redefining male excellence: keeping the promise to end the sexual exploitation of women and girls, focused on ending the demand for sexual services". We recognize that training and sensitizing the relevant actors are critical elements in combating trafficking in persons, so other key agencies, such as the Immigration Division and the police service, have included in their curriculums the training of staff to recognize the indicators of trafficking in persons and take appropriate action.

While identifying and rescuing victims from a life of abuse and exploitation is of the utmost importance, providing appropriate care for victims and helping them reintegrate cannot be overemphasized. Beginning with the Ministry of National Security and the Immigration Division in previous years, and continuing with the counter-trafficking unit since its formation, these bodies have been partnering with the NGO community and the International Organization for Migration to provide holistic care for victims of trafficking, including comfortable shelter, communication with their families and consular representation.

Although Trinidad and Tobago has been working steadfastly to combat this modern form of slavery, it recognizes that no Government or agency can address the issue single-handedly. This crime is a cross-cutting, cross-border offence that requires a collaborative approach. In that regard, and to strengthen action being taken at the national level to address this scourge, Trinidad and Tobago welcomes engagement with partners in overcoming the various challenges involved. As a small island State, we encounter challenges in ensuring the provision of appropriate shelter for both male and female victims, as well as adequate protection for them, acquiring a better understanding of male victims' needs, providing relevant language services and interpreters for victims, and providing substantive training in the area of investigating and prosecuting crimes of trafficking in persons. They are all fundamental if we are to generate an effective response to the issue.

Trinidad and Tobago wishes to take this opportunity to commend the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and all stakeholders engaged in fighting this nefarious activity. We also wish to express our particular appreciation to the International Organization for Migration for its continuing assistance at the national level with, among other things, awareness-raising and training programmes and the rescue and resettlement of victims.

In conclusion, Trinidad and Tobago reiterates its resolve to continue to take action at the national level and to engage with the relevant authorities and stakeholders at the national, regional and international levels to vigorously combat the crime of trafficking in persons and effectively address the needs of victims, including through further implementation of the Global Plan of Action and the relevant instruments.

Ms. Shiolashvili (Georgia): Georgia welcomes this high-level meeting as a good opportunity to discuss the achievements and challenges presented by implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union, and I would also like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Georgia has undertaken energetic measures to suppress human trafficking and to help prevent it by conducting a wide public-awareness campaign. In order to meet the requirements of the first three

P's — prevention, protection and prosecution — we have undertaken active measures at both the legislative and executive levels, while there has been efficient use of the fourth P, partnership, throughout the process. In 2006 Georgia ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, introduced to supplement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and in the same year we ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

Georgia's criminal code does not differentiate between trafficking in persons for the purposes of labour or sexual exploitation. The code covers both internal and transnational forms of human trafficking, and transporting a victim outside the country is considered an aggravated form of the crime. At the same time, people who cross State borders illegally or produce, purchase or use forged documents are exempt from criminal liability if they committed those crimes because they were victims of trafficking in persons.

Our law on combating trafficking in persons emphasizes the State's determination to suppress human trafficking and is based on the relevant internationally recognized standards. It determines the organizational and legal grounds for preventing and combating human trafficking, the purview and obligations of State agencies and public officials, as well as legal entities, and it identifies the procedure for coordinating the activities of the various State bodies. On that basis, the following activities have been undertaken.

We have created a State fund for protecting and assisting victims; established a shelter for victims; created a permanent inter-agency coordination council for implementing measures against trafficking in persons; created a unified database on traffickers; laid down uniform standards and rules for identifying victims; formulated and put into practice guidelines for protecting victims; and determined the rules that provide compensation to victims from the State fund.

The anti-trafficking information campaign and the large-scale educational activities conducted by the Georgian Government, in cooperation with international organizations and local non-governmental organizations, also contribute to both the prevention of trafficking in persons and the prosecution of those responsible, as well as to the protection of the victims thereof. In particular, a number of trainings have been conducted for the following target groups: judges and prosecutors, high school teachers, officials of the relevant ministries, representatives of the Office of the Public Defender and the media.

Issues related to this topic are included in the various curriculums throughout the country. These vary from the curriculums of high schools to the curriculums of law enforcement bodies. In addition, the staff of law enforcement agencies regularly participate in a number of trainings organized under the auspices of various international and local non-governmental organizations. Other activities include the broadcasting of public service announcements and television and radio programmes, the preparation and dissemination of print information material, and the holding of public discussions.

Special attention is paid to the prosecution of traffickers. There are specialized investigators and prosecutors working on the trafficking cases. The law enforcement authorities regularly report on the prosecution of the cases of trafficking in persons to the Interagency Coordination Council. Anti-human trafficking activities planned by the Georgian Government for 2013-2014 encompass four main goals. Equal attention is given to preventing such crimes and to protecting the victims, prosecuting offenders and forming partnerships in all the endeavours.

In conclusion, allow me to reaffirm Georgia's commitment to addressing human trafficking in a comprehensive manner by continuing to work with all regional and international actors in this regard.

The Acting President: I give the floor to the observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Chullikatt (Holy See): Today's meeting presents the international community with an opportunity not only to assess the progress achieved since the adoption in 2010 of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, but also to renew our commitment to working together and to condemning in one voice the abhorrent and immoral practice of trafficking in human beings.

The Global Plan of Action has provided the United Nations with a resource for working together to combat all forms of human trafficking and for ensuring that confronting human trafficking remains one of the top issues of concern to the international community. However, such political commitment

must be backed by concrete actions on the ground so as to ensure that victims are freed from this repugnant form of contemporary slavery and given the necessary assistance to rebuild their lives.

The mobility of people across national boundaries is a human experience affecting all countries and regions of the world. It is a reality which presents opportunities to foster greater understanding among peoples and jointly to improve the social and economic well-being of migrants and their families. For too many, however, the reality of migration is no longer a matter of free choice, but rather has become a necessity. This sense of desperation provides human traffickers with the opportunity to prey on migrants and has contributed to making human trafficking one of the fastest-growing and most lucrative criminal activities in the world today.

Trafficking in persons constitutes a shameful crime against human dignity and a grave violation of fundamental human rights. Those who commit such crimes debase themselves and poison human soiidarity. People are never to be used or treated as instruments for unscrupulous profit-mongering by being forced into slavery, which always constitutes an affront to the dignity of human nature and to the fundamental values shared by humankind.

Effective juridical instruments are crucial for ending this abominable trade in human beings, to prosecute its profiteers, and to assist in the rehabilitation and reintegration of its victims. To that end, the creation under the Global Plan of Action of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, provides a tangible means for ensuring support for those who suffer the dehumanizing impact of being trafficked.

While political, social and legal protections are indispensable for combating the scourge of human trafficking, we must also work to address those societal factors that foster the environment that makes human trafficking possible. One such overriding factor is the increasing commodification of human life. Such commodification can be seen in the women and girls who are trafficked each year for the sole purpose of making money from the sale of their bodies. There is indeed an urgent need here to challenge lifestyles and models of behaviour, in particular with regard to the image of women, which have generated what has become a veritable industry of sexual exploitation.

Trafficking in women for the purpose of sexual exploitation accounts for 58 per cent of all cases reported globally, and demonstrates how increased demand fuels this market for human slavery and tolerates its immense human costs. It is a grim reminder that prostitution and consumers of so-called sexual services not only contribute to the trafficking of women and girls, but also disrespect their human dignity.

The commodification of human beings unfortunately does not lie solely in the realm of sexual exploitation, but can also be seen in unrelenting consumerist tendencies that demand more for less without due regard for the rights of workers. Around the world, forced labour accounts for more than a quarter of the victims of trafficking. This is a stark reminder that participating in a globalized economy requires adequate regulations to ensure that the qualitative, subjective value of human work is given precedence over purely quantifiable, objective product. In so doing, we can help to foster a deeper and richer ethical understanding of the value and dignity of human labour, and fashion economic and social systems that respect human rights.

Addressing human trafficking will remain an elusive goal if the courage to address the dark reality of consumerism feeding the exploitation of vulnerable human beings is lacking. In that regard, it is necessary to recognize that it is extreme poverty which often drives those who desire a better future into the hands of those preying upon the vulnerability of the poor and the defenceless. These individuals, prompted by a genuine desire to provide for themselves and their needy families, too easily become the unsuspecting victims of those who make false promises of a better future in another country or community.

Our efforts to address human trafficking are inherently linked, therefore, to our shared determination to eradicate poverty and address the lack of equal economic opportunity. That link recognizes that economic poverty inherently opens the door to exclusion and exploitation by those whose moral and spiritual poverty allows them to see people in need no longer as brothers and sisters to be respected, protected and cared for, but merely as a means to an end.

The Holy See, through its Catholic institutions and agencies around the world, is providing assistance, care and support to thousands of survivors of human trafficking. These institutions and their courageous individual workers place themselves in harm's way on a

daily basis to help those who have fallen victim to this modern plague of human trafficking. Many of these individuals have paid dearly in their endeavours to provide assistance to victims or expose the victimizers. The Holy See regards today's debate and assessment of the Global Plan of Action as a good opportunity to reinvigorate our efforts to address the evil of human trafficking so that men and women who fall prey to such trafficking will know that we stand in solidarity with them and that we will not cease in our efforts to ensure that today's victims of human trafficking become tomorrow's survivors.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution, 33/18 of 10 November 1978, and decision 53/453, of 18 December 1998, I now call on the observer for the International Organization of la Francophonie.

Mr. Savadogo (International Organization of la Francophonie) (*spoke in French*): The International Organization of la Francophonie welcomes the commitment with which the General Assembly and Member States have been working to eradicate the insidious form of slavery that is human trafficking. I would particularly like to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the coordinator States for their useful contributions to the debate.

Not a day goes by without the scourge of slavery affecting men and women from around the globe. La Francophonie is therefore fully committed to the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. As human trafficking knows no borders, neither should we, and within la Francophonie we keep track of the commitment of our member States to eradicate this ubiquitous phenomenon. Therefore, the ongoing efforts of francophone countries, together with those of all Member States, should be not only welcomed, but also consolidated.

Of the countless victims of human trafficking, some 60 per cent are women and children. This attack on fundamental rights requires urgent action. Within the International Organization of la Francophonie, this sense of urgency led to the adoption in March 2012 of an action plan on violence against women and girls, at the margins of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

The International Organization of la Francophonie highlights the importance of establishing partnerships in the fight against this crime. In particular, we must play a vital role in partnership with civil society groups, including non-governmental organizations and the media.

Given the immensity of the task, what counts today is not achieving the end goal but moving forward, asking Member States to ratify the Trafficking in Persons Protocol and encouraging them to provide, to the extent possible, funds to stem the humanitarian disaster that is human trafficking. Bearing in mind that most actions should be taken at the local level, we believe that making individual Member States aware of their responsibilities is crucial to our ability to change the situation and do something concrete for the development of our societies.

We thank the international community, civil society organizations and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for their significant efforts in this society-wide struggle. We are happy to see the outcomes of this crucial debate materialize on behalf of the youth of the twenty-first century, at a time when young people must meet the challenge of sustainable development, which concerns them most of all.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/4, of 16 October 1992, I now call on the observer for the International Organization for Migration.

Ms. Getaneh (International Organization for Migration): As some here will recall, when the International Organization for Migration (IOM) was one of the first intergovernmental organizations working in the area of counter-trafficking in the mid-1990s, little was known about this modern-day form of slavery. Over the past 15 years, IOM, with our partners, has implemented over 882 projects in over 94 countries, trained tens of thousands of public and private representatives, and protected and assisted more than 30,000 victims of trafficking. In 2000, IOM created a global assistance fundamental that, with the financial support of Governments and private sector entities, has assisted over 1,500 victims of trafficking.

We are conscious, however, that the litmus test of our collective efforts to combat human trafficking has to be measured by the answer to a simple question. Have we significantly decreased the scale of the problem? The question is difficult to answer. We still do not know, for example, how many people are trafficked every year. Moreover, we have no reason to believe, or even suspect, that human trafficking is any less

prevalent than it was when we began our work nearly two decades ago.

With this in mind, I would like to highlight three areas in which, from the IOM perspective, more concerted effort is required.

First is the issue of protecting victims by protecting migrants. The identification of victims of trafficking remains one of the principal challenges to effective protection. By land, sea or air, migrants keep coming, despite the well-known risks of mishap, abuse and deaths, which are estimated in the thousands. Among irregular migrants, how many are trafficked? The process of identification is not an exact science, and there is often a fine line separating a trafficked person from an exploited or abused migrant. Yet, to positively identify a person as a victim of trafficking means that he or she may be eligible for temporary or permanent residence or other forms of assistance. An irregular migrant with similar needs often receives none of this, especially if he is male and does not fit a particular stereotype. Surely we would identify and protect more victims of trafficking if we prioritized the rights and needs of irregular migrants.

We must also address those traditional practices that we know exacerbate the vulnerability of migrants — perhaps most obviously the selective application of labour laws in certain sectors. We hear too many stories about migrant workers, in a regular or irregular situation, who work in labour-intensive sectors for wages well below the minimum required by law or the industry standard.

Let us not confuse the issue by calling it an immigration problem. This is a problem of exploitation, and yet the victims of these scenarios are generally more likely to be penalized for their minor role than are employers who profit from cheap, or even free illegal labour. There is no quick or easy way to strengthen our ability to identify and protect victims of trafficking, but a greater commitment to protecting all migrants regardless of status may be a precondition.

My second point is on preventing trafficking by discouraging demand. For too long, we have assumed that poverty or a lack of opportunities at home is the root cause of trafficking. But let us not mistake what we know to be common migration push factors for the root causes of human trafficking. It would seem that while such conditions can undoubtedly make people more vulnerable to trafficking, they are not the root causes of trafficking in persons as such. Unfortunately, the misallocation of root causes has proved to be a distraction, encouraging us to focus our prevention efforts disproportionately on the supply end of the human-trafficking chain in countries and communities of origin, rather than on the demand for the goods and services produced and provided by victims.

While hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent on campaigns to raise awareness of trafficking among aspirant migrants in the vain hope that they will not be seduced by false offers of employment abroad, relatively little has been spent to prevent trafficking in the countries and communities where the victims are most likely to be exploited. IOM is working to redress that imbalance. In 2009, we started a pilot initiative, known as Buy Responsibly, which challenges conscientious consumers to ask what is behind the things we buy. We believe that if we can encourage such people to regularly seek assurances from their retailers that individual consumer products have not been produced by trafficked and exploited migrants, that in turn can encourage those retailers to prefer to stock items that are guaranteed to have been produced ethically.

Preventing trafficking in persons undoubtedly requires a sustained investment of time and resources, and it may be the most difficult of the "three Ps" to achieve. But surely we will succeed in preventing trafficking in persons only if we address the root causes directly. That means working to curtail the demand for the labour and services of trafficked persons, as well as the goods produced by their labour, and to reduce the profit margins for the perpetrators.

My final point is on partnerships. Trafficking is an organized crime that necessitates an organized response, and yet it is a phenomenon whose very nature seems designed to frustrate cooperation among those seeking to counter it. As international organizations, we have a great deal more work to do to strengthen our relationships in the fight against trafficking or we risk missing opportunities to leverage our comparative strengths in pursuit of our common goal.

Governments have a crucial role to play in encouraging private companies to be proactive. Public-private partnerships are critical if we are to make progress in the fight against human trafficking in the next decade. Only once we are able to effectively marshal the collective commitment and capacities of

national Governments, inter- and non-governmental organizations, as well as other civil society stakeholders, will we begin to make noticeable progress towards eradicating this crime.

Let me conclude today by saying that we have only just started and that whatever our achievements, they are modest and negligible in the face of the challenges that lie ahead.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker for the high-level meeting on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

As previously announced, the General Assembly will now hear presentations by the Chairs of panel discussions 1 and 2 of the high-level meeting. After the presentations of the summaries, I will deliver closing remarks on behalf of the President of the General Assembly.

I now give the floor to Mr. Martin Sajdik, Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations and Chair of panel discussion 1.

Mr. Sajdik (Austria): Panel 1 united five fascinating speakers of truly different backgrounds. The first was Rani Hong, a child trade victim who, together with her husband, now runs an non-governmental organization that helps other victims of the crime of human trafficking to once and for all leave that terrible fate behind. Rani spoke to us as a survivor, but most of all she gave us hope that the common fight against the evil of human trafficking is not in vain.

Through the second speaker, Jim Clancy from CNN, we understood how media helped to raise awareness of a truly global audience for a truly global problem. CNN has been highlighting human trafficking in its different aspects and forms in its Freedom Project since 2011. Jim Clancy particularly emphasized the paramount importance of partnerships between media, Government structures and civil society, as only in partnership with one another can we crown the fight against human trafficking with success.

The third panelist, Ms. Joy Ngozi Ezeilo of Nigeria, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, spoke of the need for partnerships and enhanced cooperation. Victims should benefit from remedies. The demand side is to be targeted as a root cause of human trafficking. In that respect, much more focus should be placed on preventative measures. Ms. Ezeilo called on all Member States to ratify the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, the Domestic Workers Convention of the International Labour Organization, as well as the Migrant Workers Convention.

The next speaker, Ms. Saisuree Chutikul of Thailand, member of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, presented us with a bleak overview of the weak support that Fund has enjoyed so far. Only $806,000 have been raised so far, enabling the financing of just 11 out of 250 projects. That is not even a meager 3 per cent of the estimated $30 billion yearly turnover of human trafficking. She asked not only Member States, but also other donors, to have a heart for the victims and to have a heart to give.

Kay Buck of the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST) introduced the audience to her successful groundwork in Los Angeles. CAST works with law firms on a pro-bono basis in civil cases against traffickers. It also trains the juvenile justice system to ensure that identified victims of human trafficking are not prosecuted for crimes they committed under pressure from their traffickers. Another element of CAST's work is to make survivors become self-sufficient members of the community.

The unfortunately too brief interactive discussion gave the opportunity to representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to speak about their experiences, ideas and concerns. An Indian NGO informed us about its activities to ensure free education for girls to prevent them from going into early fake marriages and prostitution. For that organization, partnership is not a choice but a necessity. Equality Now, an NGO from the United States of America, demanded that NGOs be consulted much more by United Nations agencies when formulating their policies on human trafficking.

The key word of panel 1 was undoubtedly "partnerships" — partnerships between Governments, NGOs and the media. The key role of NGOs in fighting the scourge of human trafficking was best highlighted by the words of Ms. Joy Ngozi Ezeilo when she noted in her final statement that NGOs should raise their voices as they are the ones who work with the victims and provide trust and confidence to them.

To end my summary, I have to go back to the dire financial state of the Trust Fund. As Ms. Chutikul stated, the financing of programmes is not secured

for 2014 due to a lack of funds. In that respect, let me remind representatives of the closing sentence of the statement made by Rani Hong, a survivor of human trafficking. Rani said, "The survivors are counting on everyone in the room". We are not very many in the Hall now, but that is what she said. And when we had the first panel there were many more people so it was really poignant. The survivors are really counting on everyone in the room.

Let me take this opportunity, as the co-facilitator of this wonderful high-level meeting, to express my thanks and appreciation to my dear and esteemed co-facilitator and colleague, Mr. Antonio Lima of Cape Verde, for the always truly extraordinary cooperation that I have enjoyed with him. He is a man of conviction, with a big heart that beats for the victims of human trafficking. My thanks also go to Ambassador Lima's collaborator, Mr. José Mendonça, as well as to my colleagues in the Austrian Mission, Ms. Nadia Kalb and Mrs. Julia Thallinger, and last but not least to Ms. Simone Monasebian of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in New York.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Antonio Pedro Monteiro Lima, Permanent Representative of Cape Verde to the United Nations and Chair of panel discussion 2.

Mr. Lima (Cape Verde): Monday's panel discussion on the theme "Sharing best practices and lessons learned for prevention and prosecution in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action and relevant legal instruments" was rich thanks to the active participation of civil society and Member States alike. We heard about the efforts that have been made and the lessons learned. I was encouraged to hear that some Member States found that certain approaches, laws or policies work for them and that they stand ready to work with others to see if their approaches could be duplicated successfully elsewhere. I was also grateful for the candid manner in which participants highlighted the challenges that still lie ahead and the areas where there is room for improvement.

First of all, our fight against trafficking in persons should focus foremost on prevention. Asking ourselves how to prevent an occurrence requires that one analyse the causes thereof. We heard from almost all speakers that the main underlying cause of human trafficking is a lack of development, which leads to poverty and desperation. In Ms. Puri's words, we must address the root structural causes of human trafficking, with a particular focus on women. Her Royal Highness Princess Mahidol also highlighted the particular challenges facing women and girls in rural areas and other vulnerable groups. Ensuring that women and children have adequate health care and education will ensure that they and men and boys are trained and aware of their rights. Development will grant them a chance to turn into healthy young people who have skills to find a job and are, as a result, less likely to fall into the trap of those very sophisticated trafficking networks.

Ambassador Lundborg rightly highlighted the role of corruption as an enabling factor for trafficking. Indeed, corruption and trafficking are closely interlinked. Human trafficking would not be possible without the many middlemen and middlewomen who make a profit on the way. Member States, in partnership with civil society, must redouble their efforts to focus on that very difficult challenge.

Princess Mahidol's recommendation that the fight against human trafficking be made part and parcel of the post-2015 development discussions in Qatar in 2015 is an important one, as is Ms. Baderschneider's suggestion, from the private sector angle, that investing in businesses in local communities is another way to increase development. Creating jobs, training staff and raising workforce productivity are all very much in line with the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda.

The panel highlighted the fact that awareness-raising and advocacy must be undertaken in a comprehensive and holistic manner with a particular focus on schools, families of potential victims, and traffickers — all involving cities, towns and villages.

But prevention is not only the responsibility of those countries that lose their children, men and women to traffickers. It is just as much the responsibility of receiving countries. One participant rightly noted, for example, that countries have their own challenges to face cannot fight human trafficking alone; they must be able to count on the transit and destination countries to work preventively.

Prevention on the destination side means that those receiving trafficked persons ask themselves what makes their country so interesting for traffickers. Why does the demand persist? I was intrigued by Ambassador Lundborg's example of the Swedish law which, he noted, is now supported by 70 per cent of the Swedish

population and aims to prevent traffickers from seeking Sweden out as a destination country.

It is through the exchange of experiences such as the aforementioned that we learn from each other about what may work and what may not in the different contexts in which we operate. I remember perfectly that the representative of Nigeria made exactly that point.

I was encouraged by another example shared by Ms. Baderschneider, formerly of Exxon Mobil. The company found ways to prevent human trafficking through awareness-raising and norm-setting in the business community. If Governments encourage or mandate businesses to eliminate the demand for forced labour, traffickers will lose their markets. Companies and Governments can enhance their budding practices, audit their suppliers, train employees and work with civil society on the supply-chain assessment toolkit that is being prepared.

The second main topic of our panel discussion was the need for increased investigations and prosecutions of traffickers. The succinct final statement made by the civil society representative from Vital Voices Global Partnership summed up one of our main challenges. She asked those who have expressed their full commitment to the Global Plan of Action how we can, together, turn those statements into actions and attain higher prosecution numbers.

Ms. Puri of UN-Women shared her experience from the recent session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which focused on the criminalization of trafficking offences and the need for increased accountability. She highlighted the fact that current conviction rates are unacceptable and referred to what she called a knowledge crisis. One participant added that prosecution should also take place in destination countries.

Her Royal Highness Princess Mahidol, echoed by others, reflected on the need to ensure that legislative frameworks and legal procedures are in place to allow for the implementation of the Global Plan of Action. She rightly noted that investigations and prosecutions should be conducted by well-trained officials based on evidence and carefully collected data.

Ambassador Lundborg concluded by saying that if corruption and human trafficking were more frequently prosecuted, leading to rightful convictions, then part of those $34 billion in assets would become available and could be returned to where they came from. Such recovered assets could be used by Governments to assist victims in need, which is an additional incentive to step up law enforcement training and the implementation of the prosecution pillar of the Global Plan of Action.

At this juncture, let me transmit to the General Assembly the short message my Minister Ms. Marisa Helena Morais wanted to deliver during the panel discussion:

> "Yesterday was a very interesting day with proficuous statements and testimony, and I personally believe that we shared useful practices. However, the concern with financing was always present, along with the recognition that we are fighting a more than $30 billion industry."

Let me share with the Assembly something we are trying to do in Cape Verde. It is a very recent undertaking, and we cannot say that we already have obtained practical results. We have recently created a fund for the management of assets and goods seized in the pursuit of the fight against direct trafficking. The fund will be used to strengthen the capacity of the judiciary and security forces and provide protection and assistance to victims. These allocations have already been approved by Parliament. I am glad to announce that Cape Verde will be contributing to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking, using resources from the fund I have just mentioned.

We believe that the success of the fight against organized crime depends mostly on the ability to seize profits and goods earned through the practice of crime. In so doing, we are really combating impunity, and we believe that the best destination for those profits and goods will always be their use in protecting and assisting the victims.

Finally, several speakers shared an important point about the need for political will and accountability at the highest levels, and highlighted the important role of civil society. My colleague Ambassador Sajdik, whom I thank for his kind words about me and my team, has already touched on partnership, assistance for victims and the need for cooperation and for continued and predictable resources as we continue to fight human trafficking. Though much more was said, I will end my summary here. I would also like to thank again my colleague from Austria and his team, as well as my team and all those who took part in the sometimes very

tough discussions leading up to this high-level meeting on human trafficking. It is important for me, and for all of us, to be present today and to say that we want to stop human trafficking.

The Acting President: We have come to the end of a hard and thought-provoking high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, but we still have miles to go before we can proclaim that all human beings are born free and none are held in slavery or servitude, as the Assembly envisaged in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights more than 60 years ago. It is not often that a meeting of this kind lasts two days, and that in itself is testimony to the increased focus and dedication that Member States are devoting to the issue of modern-day slavery. But we must go further.

I would first like to take this opportunity to again thank the co-facilitators of this event, the Permanent Representatives of Cape Verde and Austria, Mr. Antonio Pedro Monteiro Lima and Mr. Martin Sajdik, for their excellent efforts to make this high-level meeting a provocative and illuminating one. Their important Chairs' summaries highlighted the illuminating and frank discussions in which Member States and civil society engaged yesterday. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his commitment to this meeting and the cause, and the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and his team for their expertise and invaluable contribution. Finally, I would like to thank all those here, including the representatives of civil society and the participants in the panels, plenary and side events, for ensuring that this event was well attended by ministers and other distinguished representatives from near and far.

The statements and proposals made in the course of this meeting have been enlightening. They have reminded us how much we can do to tackle this heinous crime, despite the diverse contexts in which we all operate. Some of us are transit countries; others are countries of origin or destination; and some of us may face two or three of those challenges in our countries at the same time. Many best practices were outlined during the meeting, as were the challenges of the implementation of the Global Plan of Action. In accordance with resolution 67/190, we will soon produce a summary of the meeting, identifying the achievements, gaps and challenges in the implementation of the Global Plan and the relevant legal instruments, but for now I will briefly highlight five of them.

First, too many Member States have still not ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and implementation is lagging among many who ratified it years ago. Passing legislation that criminalizes trafficking in persons and at the same time protects the rights of victims is a step in the right direction. However, such legislation means nothing if it is not being implemented by our law-enforcement agencies, lawyers and judges. As a result, impunity for human trafficking crimes remains a considerable problem, and one that we must confront in our lifetime.

Secondly, the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is indispensable to our fight against human trafficking. It is mostly NGOs that work with victims on the ground. Member States must continue to learn from civil society and redouble their efforts to seek their input and guidance in implementing the Global Plan of Action.

Thirdly, there is a real need for increased cooperation, partnerships and technical assistance in order to better implement the Global Plan of Action and the relevant legal instruments. In addition to bilateral and multilateral exchanges and better coordination among United Nations entities, particularly the 16 that form the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, there is a dire need to develop partnerships with the media and the private sector, and to focus on a bottom-up approach, where appropriate. This will ensure that our prevention work focuses on the villages and towns where sophisticated trafficking routes often start.

Fourthly, many speakers reflected on the need for increased coordination, research and data. More must be done in those areas. Many also noted the extent to which they rely on the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in these areas, on the ground as well as at the intergovernmental level. As the main United Nations entity mandated to fight human trafficking, it currently has only two regular-budget posts dedicated to this area. I echo the call of many to strengthen UNODC's capacity so it can continue to assist us with the great task ahead.

Fifthly, there is the disparity between the criminal income of the human-trafficking industry, some billions of dollars a year, and the comparatively meagre funds dedicated to preventing and responding to this crime. The United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for

Victims of Human Trafficking, Especially Women and Children, one of the most important aspects of the Global Plan of Action, has done much with the very small resources it has received, and cannot continue to fulfil its mandate without robust and reliable funding. I would like to sincerely thank Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Belarus, the United Arab Emirates, Australia, Austria, the Kingdom of Thailand and Singapore for the pledges they made to the Trust Fund during this meeting, and hope that they will inspire others to contribute to the Fund. We owe it to our young girls, boys, women and men, as Goodwill Ambassador Mira Sorvino put it, to provide alternatives to "being swept up by traffickers into a sea of anonymous suffering" (*A/67/PV.77, p. 6*). The victims are counting on us today.

Despite the challenges ahead of us, I am encouraged by the overwhelming political will that has been voiced in this Hall to step up the fight against trafficking in persons. Let us capitalize on that momentum and re-energize ourselves to eradicate this atrocious phenomenon once and for all.

The high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons is now concluded.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 103?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.